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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

In these most important days and debates here in the people's House, we beg You to send Your Spirit of wisdom as the Members struggle to do the work that has been entrusted to them. Inspire them to work together with charity, and join their efforts to accomplish what our Nation needs to live into a prosperous and secure future.

In this week in the wake of celebrating the great blessings bestowed upon our Republic, please bless those men and women who serve our Nation in uniform wherever they may be. Give them the protection of Your loving embrace, and grant them the trust to know they have our eternal gratitude.

Please keep all the Members of this Congress and all who work for the people's House in good health, that they might faithfully fulfill the great responsibility given them by the people of this great Nation.

Bless us this day and every day. May all that is done here this day be for Your greater honor and glory. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BACA led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

TRIBUTE TO DAISY OUTDOOR PRODUCTS

(Mr. WOMACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Daisy Outdoor Products, a Rogers, Arkansas, company celebrating its 125th anniversary.

Daisy moved to Rogers from Plymouth, Michigan, in 1958. Since that move, Daisy's impact on the northwest Arkansas economy has been substantial—not only in providing jobs, but the incredible recognition this famous brand brings to our region.

As the world's oldest and largest BB gun manufacturer, Daisy has a storied history. Its contributions to the shooting sports, the United States military, and the character of young men and women nationwide is noteworthy. And who can forget Ralphie in the famous movie "A Christmas Story" and his coveted Red Ryder, the most famous BB gun ever produced?

Mr. Speaker, 125 years in business is a significant milestone by any measurement. It is a tribute to the vision, commitment, and hard work of the company leadership and the employees of Daisy.

Congratulations, Daisy. I'm proud of you, and our Nation is proud of you.

COMMEMORATING CAPE VERDEAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the rich history of Cape Verde as we mark Cape Verdean Independence Day.

This week, we honor the people of Cape Verde and those individuals of proud Cape Verdean descent here in America and around the world who are celebrating 35 years of independence. In doing so, we honor the many milestones and important Cape Verdean leaders like Amilcar Cabral, who fought for the liberation of Cape Verde. We also honor the lives, work, and rich history of Cape Verdean Americans throughout our country and particularly in my home State of Rhode Island.

Cape Verdeans have made significant contributions in the areas of art and culture, business, and public service. Cape Verdeans have brought jag to local restaurants and added zuca to the music enjoyed by our community.

Rhode Islanders of Cape Verdean descent, like speaker of the house Gordon Fox, have been prominent leaders in Rhode Island politics.

I would also like to take a moment to pay tribute to the late George Lima. Mr. Lima served during World War II as a Tuskegee airman, the first group of black fighter and bomber pilots in the history of what was then the Army Air Forces. He then served our State honorably as a State representative and as head of the Rhode Island NAACP.

Cape Verdeans are generous, skilled, proud, caring members of our community, and I am honored to celebrate Cape Verdean independence with them this week.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN: A NUCLEAR DISASTER

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the President says he supports nuclear power development, but his actions have sadly stopped construction at Yucca Mountain after more than \$10 billion of ratepayer money has already been invested, killing jobs in Nevada.

Utility companies across the country have been mandated by the Federal Government to collect over \$33 billion for the Nuclear Waste Fund to build Yucca Repository. The Federal Government promised citizens of South Carolina and Georgia that nuclear material being stored at Savannah River Site would be sent to Yucca for permanent disposal. Now, this high-level waste will sit at SRS, and as reported by The Post and Courier, at more than 106 other sites across the country. The Post and Courier has editorialized that the President's position is "breath-takingly irresponsible."

I agree with Brian Tucker, president of the North Augusta Chamber of Commerce, that the administration should quit playing political games and follow through on promises to be guided by science and not by politics.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

PROTECTING MEDICARE

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, when former President Harry Truman and his wife, Bess, were officially enrolled as the first Medicare beneficiaries on July 1, 1966, only 50 percent of America's seniors could afford private health insurance.

The high risks associated with covering America's over-65 population made seniors basically uninsurable. That all changed 45 years ago last week when Medicare was established as a guaranteed benefit, providing a basic level of care for seniors regardless of income or illness.

From the beginning, Medicare has proven resilient, adapting to rapid changes in medicine and surviving in wartime and peace, economic boom times and in recession. Despite some alarmist claims, Medicare has faced more difficult financial challenges in the past than the ones it faces today. Preserving Medicare's guaranteed benefits for future generations is our solemn duty, and we must stop the push for vouchers, which will ruin America's middle class.

On the 45th anniversary of this landmark program, we must rededicate ourselves to protecting Medicare as a guaranteed benefit for tomorrow's seniors, not butchering it with a voucher

program or using it as an ATM for the top 2 percents.

Happy birthday, Medicare. If we stay true to our values, you will have many happy returns.

PROTECTING AMERICAN JOBS AND SECURING AMERICA'S ENERGY FUTURE

(Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the administration's war on coal led the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation to try and change a rule that would redefine what is considered a stream as it pertains to mining operations.

I am pleased than an amendment I offered during the debate over the budget continuing resolution has been included in the Interior appropriations bill in an effort to stop this irresponsible regulatory overreach.

No one is surprised that the Obama administration is continuing the war on coal, but this is also a war on jobs. And the coal industry employs thousands of people in eastern and southeastern Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, we all want a cleaner environment, but we need to make sure that the policies being enacted are common sense and do not come at the expense of jobs and our economy. Stopping the Obama administration from rewriting the stream buffer zone rule will be a victory for jobs and a defeat to a radical agenda that is seeking to outlaw coal entirely. We can and we must enact smart policies that clean up our environment while protecting American jobs.

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MEDICARE

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, as the deadline nears for Americans to raise its debt limit, the American people have sent a clear message to all of us:

They will not stand for a budget that is balanced on the backs of seniors and the middle class.

The American people know that it is wrong to privatize Medicare with a new voucher program, to cut guaranteed health benefits for seniors and to sacrifice Medicaid services for the poor and disabled.

It's not too late for us to compromise on a balanced approach. Yes, we can trim spending with intelligent cuts, but we must end tax breaks for the ultra rich. I state: We must end tax breaks for the ultra rich and corporations that shift jobs overseas.

No new taxes equals no new jobs. No taxes—no jobs.

We have an historic opportunity in front of us. Let's stop the partisan

bickering and work together on a plan that strengthens the middle class, lowers our deficit and creates new jobs here at home.

THE DEBT CEILING REDUCTION ACT

(Mr. BROWN of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, we have overspent and we are over-extended. Now we have to get out of debt.

For the last 20 years, we have been increasing the debt ceiling and allowing Washington to spend more and more of the taxpayers' money. This method of madness hasn't worked, and today, our economy is suffering because of it.

Yesterday, I introduced a unique bill that would lower the debt ceiling to \$13 trillion. This proposal would force Washington to make the spending cuts that we so desperately need to pay down the debt.

State and local governments, businesses and families understand, when you've maxed out your credit card, you can't just give yourself a credit increase. Instead, you have to cut spending and pay down your bills. The Federal Government is the only entity that does not understand this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2409, the Debt Ceiling Reduction Act, because we need to turn this country in a completely different direction.

MAKING AMERICANS SAFER HERE AT HOME

(Mr. CLARKE of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I have a proposal that will help us save tax dollars, pay down our debt, and better protect the American people.

Instead of spending billions and billions of dollars to secure Afghanistan at the rate that we are—and we've spent over a half a trillion of our precious tax dollars in Afghanistan over the last 10 years—I propose to redirect a small share of our tax dollars back to the U.S. and to use our money to hire and equip more police officers, more firefighters, more emergency medical providers, because one of the most effective ways to help protect the American people from a terrorist attack is to make Americans safer right here at home.

THE REPUBLICANS' ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE ENERGY STRATEGY

(Mr. ROE of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on June 22, President Obama released 30 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve—just over a day's worth of oil. The administration continues to play politics rather than develop a comprehensive national energy plan, which will lay the path for future economic growth, help lower unemployment and improve our stagnant economy. This country's economy was built on inexpensive and abundant energy.

Folks are frustrated now. A fellow stopped me the other day, and said, Doc, it's a sad day when a guy can't buy a gallon of gas and a gallon of milk for \$10.

And it's true. People don't want half measures that don't address their problems. They want solutions. They want to work. They want to provide for their families.

It is way past time to ease this pain at the pump. The President has shown no interest in the Republicans' all-of-the-above energy strategy that encourages oil and natural gas development in places like ANWR and the Outer Continental Shelf. With national unemployment stubbornly above 9 percent, the American people expect us to work together to lower the cost of energy, reduce our dependency on foreign oil and create American jobs.

OPPOSING THE PRIVATIZATION OF AMTRAK

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the privatization of Amtrak, which would threaten reliable, dependable, and accessible passenger rail service throughout the United States. I travel home every weekend on Amtrak to my district in New Jersey, and its service is an essential part of our region's economic vitality.

Under the plan to privatize Amtrak, the essential service they provide to millions of passengers could be lost, and nearly 20,000 Amtrak jobs could be eliminated. State-owned infrastructure that Amtrak currently maintains could be turned over to the already deficit-burdened States to maintain. It is likely that station stops will be cut and that commuter rail services will bear increased costs. Additionally, freight railroads that currently use Amtrak-supported lines may face logistical problems if Amtrak becomes privatized.

Under the proposal to privatize Amtrak, many important labor provisions will be eliminated. Future railroad employees will be exempt from disability, pension, retirement, and unemployment benefits. By removing future employees from these benefit systems, current and retired employees will be negatively affected, and railroads will face increased taxes to maintain the solvency of these systems.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the privatization of Amtrak.